

REMARKS

Claims 1-25 are all the claims pending in the application, new claims 19-25 having been added as indicated herein. The Examiner maintains the rejections of claims 1-4 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Friz et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,786,994), hereinafter referred to as Friz. Claims 1-10, 14, 15, 17, and 18 are newly rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by newly applied reference Babula et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,381,557), hereinafter referred to as Babula.

Claim Modifications Should Be Entered

As an initial matter, Applicant submits that the modifications set forth above should be entered as they were previously pending before the Examiner in claim 5, for example. Therefore, the amendments cause no new issues requiring further considerations.

§ 102(e) Rejections (Friz) - Claims 1-4

The Examiner rejects claims 1-4 over Friz for the reasons set forth on pages 3-4 of the Office Action and in the *Response to Arguments* section.

With respect to independent claims 1 and 3, Applicant amends these claims, as indicated herein, and submits that Friz does not teach or suggest at least “a control device which stores all of the histories of said evaluation results regarding the image quality which respective medical image input devices hold to control the histories thereof centrally,” as recited in amended claim 1 and similarly recited in claim 3. That is, Applicant submits that there is no description in Friz about controlling evaluation results regarding the quality of a medical image input device, much less about the evaluation results with respect to the image quality. In other words, Friz et al. describes nothing about the quality of an image input by a medical image input device.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116
U.S. Appl. No.: 09/536,315

Therefore, for at least the above-stated reasons, Applicant submits that independent claims 1 and 3 are patentably distinguishable over Friz.

Claims 2 and 4 are patentable at least by virtue of their respective dependencies from independent claims 1 and 3.

§ 102(e) Rejections (Babula) - Claims 1-10, 14, 15, 17, and 18

The Examiner rejects claims 1-10, 14, 15, 17, and 18 over Babula for the reasons set forth on pages 4-6 of the Office Action.

With respect to independent claims 1, 3, and 15, Applicant amends these claims, as indicated herein, and submits that Babula does not teach or suggest all of the limitations of these claims, respectively. For example, Babula does not teach or suggest at least “a plurality of medical image input devices having respective histories of evaluation results on specified items regarding image quality of individual medical image input devices,” as recited in claim 1 and similarly recited in independent claims 3 and 15. That is, the present invention of claims 1, 3, and 15, in which the image quality of a medical image input device can be made a target of a quality check, is quite different from Babula, which only discusses the density and the gradation in a medical image output device; the present invention makes the image quality in a medical image input device a target of a quality check, whereas Babula does not make an image input device a target of a quality check.

Similarly, with respect to independent claims 14 and 18, Applicant submits that Babula does not teach or suggest at least “wherein at least one of said one or more medical diagnostic apparatuses automatically outputs information relating to image quality of at least one of said one or more medical diagnostic apparatuses,” as recited in claim 14 and similarly recited in claim

18. That is, nowhere does Babula even mention checking the image quality of a medical diagnostic apparatus; Babula does describe that a display is connected to a display, however the display and network referred to therein are intended for the collection and transmission of checking results, but are not the targets, or objects, of the quality checking. Therefore, at least based on the foregoing, Applicant submits that Babula does not teach or suggest all of the limitations of claims 14 and 18, respectively.

Applicant submits that dependent claims 2, 4-13, 16, and 17 are patentable at least by virtue of their respective dependencies from independent claims 1 and 3.

Finally, the Examiner objects to claim 16 for the reasons set forth on page 6 of the Office Action. In response, Applicant amends claim 16 to depend from claim 15, as was originally intended, and submits that claim 16 is patentable at least by virtue of its dependency from independent claim 15.

New Claims

Applicant adds new claims 19-25, as indicated herein, to round out the scope of protection solicited for the present invention. Applicant submits that these new claims are patentable at least by virtue of their respective dependencies.

Further, with respect to dependent claims 24 and 25, Applicant submits that Friz does not discuss computerized radiography, but only covers a conventional radiation (X-ray) imaging system.

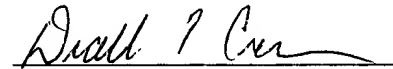
Therefore, at least based on the foregoing, Applicant submits that new claims 19-25 contain patentable subject matter.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.116
U.S. Appln. No.: 09/536,315

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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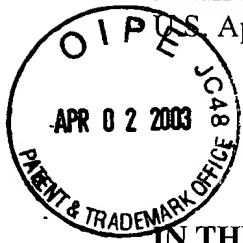
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Date: April 2, 2003



APPENDIX

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1, 3, 14-16 and 18 are amended as follows:

1. (Twice Amended) A quality control system for medical diagnostic apparatuses, wherein said medical diagnostic apparatuses comprise at least one medical image input device, said quality control system comprising:

a plurality of medical image input devices having respective histories of evaluation results on specified items regarding image quality of individual medical image input devices;

a control device which stores all of the histories of said evaluation results regarding the image quality which respective medical image input devices hold to control the histories thereof centrally; and

a network onto which said plurality of medical image input devices and said control device are connected.

3. (Twice Amended) A quality control system for medical diagnostic apparatuses, wherein said medical diagnostic apparatuses, wherein said medical diagnostic apparatuses comprise at least one medical image input device, said quality control system comprising:

a plurality of medical image input devices;

a control device which stores all of histories of evaluation results on specified items regarding image quality of individual medical image input devices to control the histories thereof centrally; and

a network onto which said plurality of medical image input devices and said control device are connected.

14. (Amended) A quality control system for one or more medical diagnostic apparatuses, comprising:

said one or more medical diagnostic apparatuses, wherein at least one of said one or more medical diagnostic apparatuses automatically outputs information relating to image quality of at least one of said one or more medical diagnostic apparatuses;

a device for strong information relating to the image quality of said one or more medical diagnostic apparatuses; and

a network onto which said one or more medical diagnostic apparatuses and said device are connected.

15. (Amended) A quality control system for medical diagnostic apparatuses, comprising:

a plurality of medical diagnostic apparatuses, wherein said plurality of medical apparatuses comprises at least one medical image input device and at least one medical image output device, said at least one medical image input device having a history of evaluation results related to its image quality;

a control device which stores histories of evaluation results related to image quality of individual medical diagnostic apparatuses, to control the histories thereof centrally; and

a network onto which said plurality of medical diagnostic apparatuses and said control device are connected.

16. (Amended) The quality control system according to claim ~~11~~15, wherein at least one of said plurality of medical diagnostic apparatuses is said control device.

18. (Amended) A quality control system for medical diagnostic apparatuses, comprising:

a plurality of medical diagnostic apparatuses, wherein at least one of said plurality of medical diagnostic apparatuses automatically outputs a history of evaluation results on specified items regarding image quality of at least one of said plurality of medical diagnostic apparatuses, to a control device;

said control device stores all histories of evaluation results on specified items regarding image quality of individual medical diagnostic apparatuses, to control the histories thereof centrally; and

a network onto which said plurality of medical diagnostic apparatuses and said control device are connected.

Claims 19-25 are added as new claims.